

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 SCCT-01 /065 W

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R 011306Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3160

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KUWIAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 7162

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, JO

SUBJECT: KING HUSSEIN APPOINTS NEW SENATE

1. SUMMARY: KING HUSSEIN YESTERDAY APPOINTED NDW 30-MAN
SENATE TO BE HEADED BY FORMER CHIEF OF ROYAL DIWAN BAHJAT AL-TALHOUNI

MAJOR ALTERATION WAS REDUCED (20 PERCENT) PALESTINIAN MEMBERSHIP
(DOWN FROM 50 PERCENT IN PREVIOUS SENATE); EAST BANKERS WELL-
BALANCED REGIONALLY. CONTAINS STRONG SPRINKLING FOR FORMER PM'S
AND OTHER NOTABLES, INCLUDING SOME SHELVED FROM PALACE POSITIONS
OR PASSED OVER IN ORIGINALLY-CONSIDERED SHARIF HUSSEIN CABINET.
NEW SENATE REFLECTS KING'S PLEDGE TO ALTER GOVERNMENT, GIVING
GREATER WEIGHT TO EAST BANK AS OPPOSED TO WEST BANK CHARACTER
OF REGIME FOLLOWING RABAT SUMMIT. END SUMMARY.

2. ROYAL DECREE WAS ISSUED YESTERDAY APPOINTING NEW 30-MAN
SENATE (BIO DATA BY AIRGRAM) TO REPLACE THAT DISSOLVED
NOV 23. (ACCORDING TO CONSTITUTION, JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT
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IS COMPOSED OF 30-MAN SENATOR NOTABLES APPOINTED BY KING,
AND 60-MAN POPULARLY-ELECTED HOUSE OF REPS) PREVIOUS

PRACTICE HAS BEEN TO HAVE 50 PERCENT PALESTINIAN, 50 PERCENT EAST BANK; NEW SENATE IS 20 PERCENT PALESTINIAN. CHRISTIANS DOWN FROM 4 TO 2. NEW SENATE REPRESENTS EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF EAST BANK MEMBERS, ALTHOUGH SLIGHTLY HEAVY ON THOSE FROM MIDDLE JORDAN (4 NORTHERNERS, 14 FROM MIDDLE, INCLUDING 5 FROM AMMAN, AND 6 FROM SOUTH) 18 FORMER MINISTERS, INCLUDING 5 FORMER PM'S.

3. SMALL PALESTINIAN ELEMENT REFLECTS KING'S POST-RABAT PLEDGE TO GIVE GREATER WEIGHT TO EAST BANK CHARACTER OF REGIME, CONTINUING TREND SET WITH RECENTLY FORMED CABINET (IN WHICH ONLY 4 RATHER THAN PREVIOUS 10 OF 20 MINISTERS ARE PALESTINIAN). PALESTINIANS IN SENATE ANNOUNCED TODAY (3 OF WHOM SERVED IN PREVIOUS SENATE, AND ONE OF WHOM WAS PREVIOUS SPEAKER OF HOUSE) ARE COMPARATIVELY TAME, ALLA HAVING LONG BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH HASHEMITE REGIME. NEW PALESTINIAN SENATORS ARE ADNAN ABU ODEH, FORMER MINISTER OF INFORMATION (APPOINTMENT IS PROBABLY A DEMOTION SINCE HE HAS FALLEN OUT OF KING HUSSEIN'S FAVOR) AND DR. SUBHI AMIN AMR, CONCURRENT MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT. MOST OTHER PALESTINIANS ARE RESPECTED ELDER STATESMEN (E.G. AHMAD TOUQAN) WITH LONG-ESTABLISHED TIES WITH GOJ.

4. JUDGING FROM APPOINTMENTS, KING APPEARS TO HAVE GIVEN HONORIFIC POSITIONS TO SEVERAL NOTABLES WHO WERE EITHER RECENTLY SHELVED FROM PALACE OR WHO WERE TURNED DOWN OR REFUSED TO SERVE IN ABORTIVE SHARIF HUSSEIN CABINET, DISCUSSED BEFORE FORMATION OF PRESENT ZAYD RIFAI GOVERNMENT. FORMER PALACE OFFICIALS THUS APPOINTED ARE FORMER HEAD OF ROYAL DIWAN BAHJAT TALHOUNI, ROYAL COUNSELLOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS 'AMER KHAMMASH, AND ROYAL COUNSELLOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS "ABD AL-MUNIM RIFAI.

5. NEW SENATORS ALSO INCLUDE SHARIF NASIR BIN JAMIL, UNCLE OF KING, AND SHARIF MAJOR GENERAL MUHAMMED HASEM, CONCURRENT TRIBAL COUNSELLOR TO KING. IT IS KNOWN THAT SHARIF NASIR, A LONG-TIME FAVORITE OF ARMY, WAS CHOSEN AS GESTURE TOWARDS ARMY ELEMENTS AND THAT SHARIF HASEM WAS CHOSEN AS GESTURE TOWARD THE TRIBES.

6. IN SEPARATE ANNOUNCEMENT, GOJ ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 30 THAT
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STUDIES WILL BEGIN EARLY NEXT YEAR TO AMEND ELECTORAL LAW TO FIX NUMBER OF WOMEN ALLOWED TO STAND FOR ELECTION TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES). NONE IS AT PRESENT ALLOWED. SEMI-OFFICIAL AR-RAYY STATES THAT ONLY TOKEN NUMBER OF WOMEN WILL BE ADMITTED. AR-RAYY ALSO NOTES THAT ELECTIONS FOR HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISSOLVED NOVEMBER 23 "MIGHT NOT TAKE PLACE BEFORE NEXT SEPTEMBER."

7. COMMENT: RECENT APPOINTMENTS WILL SOMEWHAT UPGRADE PRESTIGE BUT PROBABLY NOT BASICALLY ALTER CHARACTER OF SENATE, WHICH

REMAINS PASSIVE, MANAGEABLE AND INSIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FACTOR. MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE OF NEW SENATE IS THAT, BY DIMINISHING NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS AND EMPHASIZING QUINTESSENTIAL EAST BANK CHARACTER BY INTRODUCING TRIBAL AND PRO-ARMY PERSONALITIES, KING HUSSEIN HAS OFFERED FURTHER EVIDENCE OF FULFILLMENT OF HIS PLEDGE FOLLOWING RABAT CONFERENCE TO ALTER GOJ INSTITUTIONS SO AS TO EMPHASIZE EAST BANK CHARACTER OF REGIME. AT SAME TIME, APPOINTMENT OF RESPECTED PALESTINIANS ABU ODEH AND DR. AMIR MAY BE SOMEWHAT REASSURING TO JITTERY PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY. THUS FAR, DOWNGRADING OF WEST BANK REPRESENTATION IN CABINET AND SENATE HAS NOT BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY ANY MEASURES ADVERSELY AFFECTING WELFARE OR STATUS OF PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY. PICKERING

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